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ABSTRACT

This book is intended to provide early childhood staff members with an understanding and appreciation of the constraints and possibilities of child care settings, and to discuss the knowledge and skills that are needed to be effective professionals. Through short scenarios extracted from the work diaries of Australian early childhood staff, the book explores the themes that emerge from working with young children. The first section introduces the book and provides a chapter in which people working in early childhood settings share their days through excerpts from their work diaries. The second section of the book deals with the similarities among settings--the recurrent themes that emerge in the diaries in the areas of children, families, staff, curriculum, and the child care environment. Each of these similarities highlights aspects that staff need to be aware of, and each chapter is structured with "thinking points" and "challenges" for readers to consider. The third section considers the differences among the settings--in particular the characteristics and institutional constraints associated with day care centers, preschools, and the first years of school. The fourth section extends the discussion to professional development, ethical dilemmas that face early childhood workers, and the issues concerning the future of this field. (SD)

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